

Message Text

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HELSINKI FOR LESLIE H. GELB

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TAGS: PARM, US, UR, SALT

SUBJECT: MAY 5 "NEW YORK TIMES" ARTICLE ON SALT
REFERENCE: STATE 11482

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MAY 5 "NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE,
REFER TO REFTEL.

2. BEGIN TESXT:

"WASHINGTON, MAY 4 - THE WHITE HOUSE SAID TODAY THAT "TOUGH
BARGAINING" REMAINED BEFORE THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET
UNION COULD AGREE ON A NEW AGREEMENT TO LIMIT OFFENSIVE
STRATEGIC WEAPONS AND THAT THERE WERE NO PRESENT PLANS FOR
A MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT CARTER AND LEONID I. BREZHNEV
THIS SUMMER.

THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN, JODY POWELL, MADE THESE STATE-
MENTS AFTER HE WAS ASKED ABOUT A REPORT IN "THE NEW YORK
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TIMES" THIS MORNING THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD TENTATIVELY
DECIDED TO ACCEPT A SOVIET PROPOSAL ON ONE OF THE LAST FEW
OBSTICALS TO A NEW ACCORD AND THAT THIS DEVELOPMENT HAD
CLEARED THE WAY FOR A CARTER-BREZHNEV MEETING THIS SUMMER.

BUT ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID TODAY, AS THEY DID YES-
TERDAY, THAT THE UNITED STATES WAS MOVING TOWARD ACCEP-

TANCE OF SOVIET COMPROMISE PROPOSAL THAT WOULD LIMIT EACH SIDE TO 2,250 LONG-RANGE MISSILES AND BOMBERS. THEY SAID THAT AMERICAN NEGOTIATORS HAD RECENTLY BEEN INSTRUCTED TO CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO THE SOVIET UNION AT TALKS IN GENEVA.

THEY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE TWO SIDES HAD YET TO AGREE FORMALLY TO THE ARRANGEMENT, WHICH WOULD ALSO ALLOW EACH SIDE TO PLACE MULTIPLE WARHEADS ON A MAXIMUM OF 1,200 OF THE MISSILES.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS SAID THAT MR. POWELL'S REMARKS, MADE IN DENVER DURING A STOP IN PRESIDENT CARTER'S SWING THROUGH SOME WESTERN STATES, WERE AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF THE TALKS AND THAT TWO MAJOR ISSUES, AS WELL AS SEVERAL SMALLER QUESTIONS, STILL STOOD IN THE WAY OF AN AGREEMENT.

BUT THE OFFICIALS SUGGESTED THAT MR. POWELL MIGHT HAVE GIVEN AN OVERLY PESSIMISTIC PICTURE OF THE PROSPECTS FOR A SUMMIT MEETING TO AVOID GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WAS RUSHING INTO A NEW AGREEMENT. THEY ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE STRONG CRITICISM LEVELED AT THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT YESTERDAY BY 33 REPUBLICAN SENATORS MIGHT ALSO HAVE BEEN A FACTOR IN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A WHITE HOUSE DECISION TO PLAY DOWN THE POSSIBILITY OF A CARTER-BREZHNEV MEETING.

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MR. CARTER HIMSELF, WHEN ASKED BY REPORTERS IN DENVER WHETHER THE UNITED STATES AND THE SOVIET UNION HAD FINALLY AGREED ON AN OVERALL CEILING FOR MISSILES AND BOMBERS, REPLIED, "I DON'T THINK SO."

IN RELEASING A STATEMENT CRITICAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S DEFENSE AND ARMS-CONTROL POLICIES YESTERDAY, SENATOR CARL T. CURTIS OF NEBRASKA SAID ALL 38 REPUBLICAN MEMBERS OF THE SENATE HAD AGREED TO IT.

REPUBLICAN OFFICIALS ACKNOWLEDGED TODAY, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY 33 SENATORS HAD SIGNED THE DOCUMENT. BUT THEY SAID THE FIVE REMAINING REPUBLICANS WERE EXPECTED TO DO SO SOON- THE OFFICIALS DECLINED TO SAY WHICH SENATORS HAD NOT SIGNED THE STATEMENT. IF ALL 38 REPUBLICANS WERE TO VOTE AGAINST THE TREATY IN THE SENATE, IT WOULD NOT BE APPROVED.

ALTHOUGH THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR EQUAL LEVELS OF SOVIET AND AMERICAN ARMS, AN OFFICIAL OF THE REPUBLICAN POLICY COMMITTEE SAID THIS WAS UNLIKELY TO BLUNT CONGRES-

SIONAL CRITICISM OF A NEW ACCORD. HE SAID THAT WHILE THE PROPOSAL WOULD GIVE EACH SIDE EQUAL NUMBERS, THE SOVIET UNION WOULD STILL BE ABLE TO DEPLOY MUCH LARGER MISSILES WITH GREATER PAYLOADS.

YESTERDAY'S STATEMENT CRITICIZED WHAT IT CALLED "UNILATERAL CONCESSIONS" BY THE ADMINISTRATION, SAYING "IN WHAT HAS BECOME A FRIGHTENING PATTERN OF GIVING UP KEY AMERICAN WEAPONS SYSTEMS FOR NOTHING IN RETURN, PRESIDENT CARTER HAS DELAYED PRODUCTION OF CRITICAL WEAPONS SYSTEMS WITHOUT GETTING ANYTHING IN RETURN."

ON THE ARMS TALKS, THE STATEMENT SAID "CONCESSIONS TO THE SOVIETS REGARDING THEIR HEAVY MISSILES MUST BE OFFSET BY UNCLASSIFIED

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COMPARABLE CONCESSIONS BY THE SOVIET UNION." THE SENATORS ALSO SAID THE SOVIET BOMBER KNOWN IN THE WEST AS THE BACK-FIRE MUST BE INCLUDED IN ANY NEW AGREEMENT.

MR. POWELL TOLD REPORTERS IN DENVER THAT WHILE THE ADMINISTRATION FAVORED A CARTER-BREZHNEV MEETING, MOSCOW HAD SAID THAT THE NEW ARMS AGREEMENT MUST BE COMPLETED FIRST. MR. POWELL ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH A MEETING MIGHT BE "IF AND WHEN WE CAN REACH AN ARMS AGREEMENT WHICH THE PRESIDENT FEELS PROTECTS OUR SECURITY."

"THAT HAS NOT HAPPENED YET," HE SAID, ADDING THAT "TOUGH BARGAINING REMAINS."

TO CEMENT THE PROPOSED COMPROMISE ON THE OVERALL CEILING OF 2,250 LAND-BASED STRATEGIC MISSILES, SUBMARINE-LAUNCHED MISSILES, AND LONG-RANGE BOMBERS, THE OFFICIALS SAID IT WOULD FIRST BE NECESSARY FOR MOSCOW TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON AN EARLIER PLEDGE TO AGREE TO LIMIT MISSILES ARMED WITH MULTIPLE WARHEADS TO 1,200. IN ADDITION, THEY SAID THE TWO SIDES ALSO HAVE TO DEFINE FURTHER EXACTLY WHICH WEAPONS ARE TO BE INCLUDED UNDER THE PROPOSED CEILING.

IF THIS IS DONE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, NEGOTIATORS MUST STILL FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE TWO MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS THAT STAND IN THE WAY OF A COMPLETED ACCORD - THE LEEWAY EACH SIDE WOULD HAVE IN MODERNIZING EXISTING STRATEGIC WEAPONS AND WHAT LIMITS WOULD BE PLACED ON THE SOVIET BACKFIRE BOMBER, WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS SAID COULD BE USED TO ATTACK AMERICAN TARGETS, A CAPABILITY THAT THE RUSSIANS SAY THE BOMBER DOES NOT HAVE." END TEXT CHRISTOPHER

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